



Washington County
Department of Social Services
Commitment to Community



The WCDSS Dispatch

Volume X / Issue 3

240.420.2100

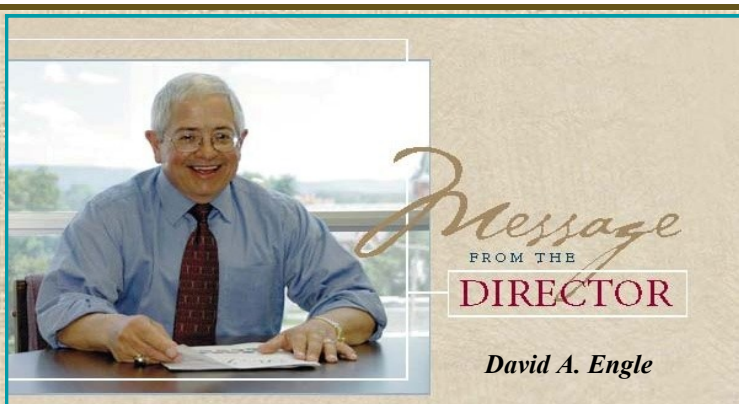
Autumn 2015

*We serve people,
promote self-reliance,
and provide safety by delivering
quality services and developing
community partnerships.*

-WCDSS Mission Statement

**"How lucky we are
to have something
that makes saying
goodbye so hard."**

~ A. A. Milne



DIRECTOR'S CORNER

It's unbelievable that this could be my last Director's Corner. It seems like just a few years ago that I was appointed to my dream job. During my 14 years in Baltimore, I was impressed by the dedication and conscientiousness of the DSS staff I encountered in the city and statewide. I sought experience in all the program areas administered by DHR with the hopes that one day I would become a local director. I aspired to be a leader who would ensure that each employee had the resources he/she needed to do his job, and that each person knew his/her efforts were recognized, valued, and appreciated. I applied for Director positions in Garrett and Carroll Counties, but was not selected. When the Washington County Director vacancy was announced, it presented an excellent opportunity because Hagerstown was equidistant from my wife's family in Northern Virginia and my relatives in Western Maryland. Also, I had done many statistical analyses in my work in Baltimore City, and I knew that Washington County had an excellent performance record. I was elated when Jan Cirincione, Chair of the Washington County Board of Social Services, called me on October 25, 1988 and offered me the Director position. Every year since then, I have

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Director's Corner
- 3 Sunshine Center News
- 5 Customer Service Award
- 6 MCC Kick-Off Results

- 7 Diversity Team Updates
- 8 Community Partner Article
- 10 Trauma Systems Therapy
- 11 New Employees & Interns
and much more . . .



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Board meetings are held the fourth
Monday of the month (September-June)
at 5:30 pm in the Washington County
DSS Board Room.

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The Family Center
221 McRand Court
Hagerstown, MD 21740
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Sam Malhotra, Secretary



Director's Corner Continued

sent Jan a thank you card on that anniversary for allowing me to have this wonderful career opportunity.

I am sure my 27 years as WCDSS Director seems like such a short time to me because I have truly loved every day I've spent with you! I learned long ago that our clients often come to us at the most difficult times in their lives, and that often their circumstances appear bleak. It is, however, your reaction to our neighbors' misfortune that is so extraordinary and inspirational. I never cease to be amazed at how patient, compassionate, understanding, and supportive you can be when helping people find their path from despair. You have taught me that we need to be nonjudgmental and give people more than one chance to "get it right". That forbearance and encouragement may not always produce results, but in most cases there is progress and the hope for a better future. You taught me to focus on the successes and not the failures. It is life affirming when we successfully eliminate risk and danger from the lives of innocent children or vulnerable adults. When we help the unemployed attain economic self-reliance, we get to share their pride and satisfaction. Child Support staff gets the same feeling of accomplishment when their efforts bring economic stability to a struggling single parent.

You have also touched my heart with your resiliency in the face of adversity. You have persevered through changing and confusing job cuts and freezes, increasing caseloads, etc., and you have soared! I see the thousands of small miracles you perform every day, and the far reaching impact of our collective efforts. When you go to the mall, to church, to your child's school, remind yourself that one in three of our neighbors gets some type of help from our agency. I hope you can share my pride in our contribution to the health, safety, and happiness of our community. We have been a great team. I will relive many happy memories of our times together.

As I retire I leave you with my mother's favorite Bible verse, which has inspired me over the years: *"Let us not grow weary in well doing; for in due season we will reap if we do not lose heart."* From the bottom of my heart, THANK YOU! I pray God will bless you all.

Kinship Caregiver Support Group Enjoys a Pumpkin Patch Outing

Some fond family memories were made on Friday, October 23rd. It was a crisp, cool evening packed with wonderful caregiver/child interactions for the 23 kinship families who spent quality bonding time at Summer's Farm. Children bounced on the gigantic orange jumping pillows, ran through the Taylor Swift corn maze, slid down the giant slides and after their hayride, trekked through the pumpkin patch looking for the perfect pumpkin to take home.



Afterward, the families joined the WCDSS Kinship Navigator staff (Ligia Teodorovici, Corey Carson, and Samantha Barrett, student intern) at two campfires complete with hot dogs, pizza mountain pies, and s'mores!! What a way to end a perfect Autumn evening!! Great fun was had by all who attended!!



SUNSHINE CENTER HOSTS COURT PERSONNEL

By: Rebecca Kennedy

On August 27, 2015, WCDSS Director David Engle, Assistant Director of Services Michael Piercy, and Program Manager Tiffany Lowe joined Sunshine Center staff in welcoming Washington County Court personnel.

Attendees were: Honorable Judge Daniel Dwyer, Honorable Judge Dana Moylan Wright, WCDSS Attorney TJ Holderby, Public Defender James Zuna Jr., Esq., Jennifer Austin, Esq., Michael Nehring, Esq., Laurie Baker, Permanency Planning Liaison, and David Bonebrake from Court Appointed Special Advocates. A tour and orientation to Sunshine Center's array of services for birth parents and resource parents were highlighted. Warm-Ups, Visit Coaching, Transitional Counseling for birth parents, Interagency Family Preservation, and support services for resource families attending the Center were clarified for the group. Clarification and questions about the differences between monitored, coached, and supervised visits were also discussed. Sunshine Center staff, Shana Matthews, Georgette Hughes, and Interns Carrie Tressler and Rebecca Kennedy, helped to make the luncheon a success. WCDSS and Sunshine Center would like to thank the Washington County Court personnel once more for attending our luncheon and your continued support in making Sunshine Center a successful, warm and distinct visitation center for our families.



TIME FOR YOUR FLU VACCINE

Questions and answers about the flu:



Q: What is the flu?

A: The flu is a contagious disease that spreads around the U.S., usually between October and May. It is a virus and is spread mainly by coughing, sneezing, and close contact. When you cough or sneeze the droplet can travel up to 6 feet away and infect another person.

Q: What is the difference between a cold and the flu?

A: If you have a runny nose, sore throat and some congestion you probably have a cold. If you have a fever, muscle aches, sore throat, fatigue, headache, congestion and a cough, you probably have the flu. Flu symptoms usually strike suddenly.

Q: Do I need a flu vaccine since I had one last year?

A: Yes. The flu viruses differ from year to year so you will need an annual flu vaccination to prevent the flu. The vaccines don't guarantee that you are 100% protected. You could catch a strain that is not included in the current year's vaccine, but the vaccine may still prevent flu-related complications.

Q: What if I'm afraid of needles?

A: If you're between the ages of 2-49 yrs. then you may be able to get the nasal spray vaccine. If you're over 49 then the needle may be the best option. It is quick and some people say they don't even feel it.

Q: If I'm allergic to eggs can I get the flu vaccine?

A: Yes. This is your lucky year. There is now a flu vaccine that is not grown in eggs. You will just need to talk to your doctor about getting this vaccine.

Q: Can I get the flu from the flu vaccine?

A: No, the vaccine does not contain a live flu virus. The vaccine will take up to 2 weeks before it gives you protection against the flu.

Q: Should I ask for an antibiotic if I get the flu?

A: No. Antibiotics will not help the flu. Antibiotics kill bacteria, but do not kill the flu virus. You could ask for antiviral medications from your doctor but they must be started within 2 days of flu symptoms appearing. They may help relieve flu symptoms and may shorten recovery time by around 1 day.

Q: Should I come to work if I have the flu?

A: No. The flu is contagious and your coworkers and customers do not want it. Stay home and get plenty of rest.

Q: How can I find out more information on the flu?

A: Check out the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) website. If you haven't had a flu vaccine before, talk to your doctor to see which one is the best for you and if it's recommended that you get one.



Jason Licari Receives DHR 2015 Customer Service Award

Washington County Department of Social Services (WCDSS) employee Jason Licari was awarded the 2015 Customer Service Excellence Award by the Maryland Department of Human Resources on October 6, 2015, during a statewide National Customer Service Week ceremony.

Mr. Licari has been a valued employee of the Washington County Department of Social Services for the past three years. He is currently a Computer Network Specialist in the Administration Division providing technical support and expertise to 250 employees. He is also responsible for planning, integrating and maintaining hardware and software to support the services delivered to Washington County residents.



Sam Malhotra, DHR Secretary, & Jason Licari

David A. Engle, WCDSS Director, said "Jason is accurate; detail oriented, and is always eager to resolve Information Technology issues and find ways to automate the DSS workload. He is a valuable resource." His comprehension and extensive technical knowledge of the multiple computer programs used by the department have been recognized at the state level where he has participated in pilot projects.

Customer Service Week is an international event devoted to recognizing the importance of customer service and to honoring people who serve and support customers with the highest degree of care and professionalism. The Department of Human Resources, Maryland's human service agency, honors its customer service professionals annually for their extraordinary service to the residents of Maryland.





Years of Service Awards

Employees were recognized for their years of service at the agency All Staff Meeting on Wednesday, October 14, 2015.



Way
To
GO!!

Years	Service to Agency	Service to State
5	Kimberly Cochran Brittany Kemp Danielle McGowan Sherie Nigh	Kimberly Cochran Kelly Kemp Danielle McGowan
10	Rhonda Hall	
15	Rhonda Forrest Bruce Massey	Rhonda Forrest
20	Denise Hall Megan Turner	Denise Hall Megan Turner
25	Connie Bonenberger Nancy Hopkins	Nancy Hopkins
30	Kathy Jordan	Pam Martin Sherry Moats

MCC KICK-OFF EVENT 2015

On Tuesday, October 20th, WCDSS staff were able to participate in another competitive corn hole competition, complete with a light lunch and 50/50 raffle to help kick-start the MCC giving season.

The corn hole winning team was Rosalind Martin and Ellie Murto. They each won a \$10 gift card to Red Lobster.

Door prize winners were Star Blickenstaff and Connie Bonenberger. They each won \$5 gift cards to Sheetz.

The 50/50 pot was \$120 and the winner was Dave Engle. He was generous to donate \$40 of his winnings back to MCC!!!

DIVERSITY TEAM UPDATE

by Rosalind Martin

The WCDSS Diversity Team meets the third Wednesday of every month, at 2:30pm in the Sharon Gay Conference Room. Those interested in embracing diversity are encouraged to join us as we discuss how our agency can become more culturally competent, diverse and inclusive.

During the October 14, 2015 All Staff meeting, Dr. Naheed Saif, a local pediatrician, originally from Pakistan, shared information about her culture.

The Diversity Team is planning a Celebration of Diversity brown bag luncheon, featuring our own Ligia Teodorovici's parents, John and Elena Enciu, on Monday, December 7 from 12-1:30PM in the Large Multi-purpose Room. Everyone is encouraged to attend and learn about Romania. Dessert will be provided.

In addition, the Diversity Team will be collecting donations of personal items for REACH. More information for both events will follow.

Diversity Team members include: Amy Robinson, Kathleen Chaney, Ann Pittman, Kevin Buckley, Amanda Bishop, Nancy Hopkins, Mike Piercy, Barb Shevokas, Natasha Ashby, Sandy Martin, Nakia Goins, Maria Fairfax, Raikeitia Estep, Bob Hockenbury, Tim Toone, Rosalind Martin and David Engle.



UPCOMING EVENTS



11/19 David Engle Retirement Celebration
12/1 Commissioners' Luncheon
12/7 Diversity Brown Bag (Romania)

12/9 Employee Holiday Party
1/13/16 All-Staff Meeting
4/15/16 Employee Recognition Day;
(Mark Mayfield, Guest Speaker)

Community Partner Feature

by Karen Cook, Executive Director

The Robert W. Johnson Community Center continues to thrive as the hub of the Jonathan Street Community. Participation in familiar and not so familiar programs continues to climb. The Center has transformed from a place where “not much was going on” to every room being used to its fullest capacity.

Over the past three years, the enrollment for our Summer Camp and After School programs have tripled. To what do we owe that success – consistency!!! A sense of trust has been established with area residents and the community at large, reflecting that our mission is being accomplished. By utilizing innovative programs, the RWJCC promotes youth development, strong family values and community engagement in a safe and nurturing environment. The Summer Camp program has been able to provide services for up to 95 registered youth in the past summer. With the hired staff of RWJCC, staff from the Western Maryland Consortium and junior camp aides who earned SSL hours, all participating youth were able to not only enjoy but demonstrate great enthusiasm about coming to summer camp everyday!!!

The 2015-2016 After School program has seen record numbers to date. The first week of school was astonishing. The weather was beautiful and children made conscious decisions to come to the Center for the After School program. By the end of the first week of school there were 49 youth registered and attending daily, compared to the 55 at the height of the 2014-2015 After School programming season. To date we have 87 youth registered with an average of 63 in attendance daily.

The purpose of our services is to provide opportunities for physical, mental and social development to area residents through community recreational and educational programs and activities, either at cost or by providing subsidies for such programs, and if necessary, expand services into underprivileged areas. While most are familiar with our Summer Camp and After School programs, there are still a few hidden gems.

The Eliminating Self Stigma (ESS) program is a nine week session which teaches participants to reduce and resist self stigmas and behavior differences. This course was designed by Dr. Alicia Lucksted, PhD, University of MD, Psychiatric Department and administered by a licensed peer support specialist from the Veterans Administration in Martinsburg, WV. The classes are held every Wednesday from 10 am to noon and we are currently in our 4th session. Former participants have remarked about increased self-esteem, self-worth, re-establishing relationships, practicing some of their new tools at home and have even returned with family members to participate in the course.

Our computer lab is also garnering greater usage from community members with some conducting job searches, applying for jobs, resume writing and completing homework assignments as college students. The computer lab is open to the public daily from 10 am to 2 pm.

The Ruth Monroe Summer Basketball League is another favorite past time hosted by RWJCC in Wheaton Park on Sunday afternoons, beginning every year on Father's Day. The 2015 Summer League recognized 17 teams, with 15 sponsors and over 200 players. A great time is had by all, whether you are a spectator, player or a volunteer, every Sunday in Wheaton Park.





WCDSS Adult Services hosted PPI Regional Meeting

By John Kenney, Adult Services Program Manager

Our Department hosted the Adult Services Policy and Practice Initiative (PPI) Western Maryland Region Round I and II combined Change Team Meeting on Thursday, November 12, 2015. Janis Pressley, retired Adult Services Supervisor from Calvert County Department of Social Services (DSS), facilitated the event.

Attending the meeting were the Change Team members from Allegany, Frederick, Garrett and Washington Counties Departments of Social Services, Program Specialists from the Department of Human Resources Social Services Administration Office of Adult Services, and University of Maryland School of Social Work faculty who are assisting with evaluation of the new case management model.

Representing Washington County DSS was: John Kenney, Program Manager of Adult Services, Kathy Boyd-Mansfield, Adult Services Supervisor, and Elizabeth Saxon, Social Services to Adults Case Manager and Melinda Potter, In-Home Aide Services Supervisor. They made a brief presentation on how the new model is working in our agency and community.

Ray Brown, Adult Services Administrator, and Leslie Hart, Adult Services Case Manager, made a presentation for the Round I Change Team of Frederick County DSS. Lisa Myers and Shannon Boyer, Adult Services Supervisors and

Rhonda Durbin, Adult Services Case Manager presented for Allegany County DSS. Mike Dennis, Adult Services Supervisor, and Scott Alexander, Adult Services Case Manager presented regarding the PPI progress at Garrett County DSS.

Under the direction of the facilitator, Janis Pressley, the group discussed the five PPI Program Performance Measures that are being implemented in November. The Performance Measures are:

1. Average duration of cases on Social Services to Adults Waiting Lists;
2. Percentage of "chronic" Case Management cases;
3. Percentage of cases closed with Achievement of Client Service Plan;
4. Percentage of cases closed with Community Partner support/services; and
5. Percentage of cases closed with family/informal supports.

In order to track these measures Adult Services will be completing a new closing form and tabulating the results. Our Adult Services Unit expects to do well on these measurements. For example, here at Washington County DSS, the Social Service To Adults Waiting Lists have been eliminated using the new case management model. The average duration of cases on Social Services to Adults Waiting Lists for Washington County is zero.

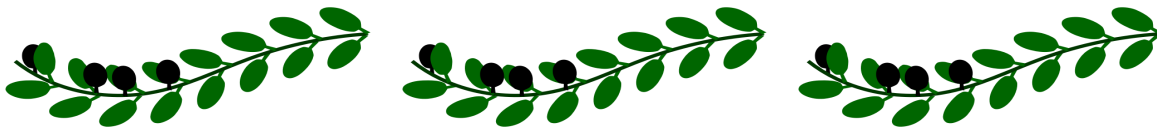
Trauma Systems Therapy to begin within WCDSS's Child Welfare Department

Washington County Department of Social Services was pleased to accept an invitation to partner with the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Child Welfare Strategy Group in collaboration with New York University and KVC Health Systems to pilot test an adapted version of Trauma Systems Therapy. Trauma Systems Therapy is a comprehensive approach to helping children exposed to complex trauma regain emotional regulation. Trauma Systems Therapy aims to reduce barriers between service systems, increase the understanding of a child's symptoms in the context of his or her world, and build on the family's strengths. It has been successfully implemented in non-profit agencies across the country. The intervention is still in the planning stages with training dates planned in December 2015 and January 2016. Services would begin immediately following training to help:

- Foster parents gain parenting skills to support children with trauma histories;
- Children improve their well-being while living in stable placements and moving towards permanence, and
- Agencies retain motivated, skilled foster parents.

There are currently 184 youth who are in an out-of-home placement in Washington County. Many of these young people have experienced traumatic events in their lives due to exposure to psychological, sexual, or physical abuse, neglect, and dislocation. Trauma can have both immediate and long term affects on a child's development, brain functioning, and behavioral regulation. This project will provide increased training to the foster parents who provide the direct care of children placed in their homes. The added training and intervention strategies will help to provide a nurturing and responsive environment to the young person as well as facilitate a supportive network for the foster parent. As a result, placement stability for the young person will increase to further enhance their healing process.

This project is an 18 month pilot test being conducted in Washington County and Richland County, Ohio. The non-profit, non-partisan research firm, Child Trends, located in Bethesda, Maryland has been secured to conduct the project evaluation. The Annie E. Casey Foundation creates a brighter future for the nation's children by developing solutions to strengthen families, build paths to economic opportunity, and transform struggling communities into safer and healthier places to live, work and grow.



Great News! The 2015 Wellness Plan healthy activities deadline has been **extended to December 31, 2015!**

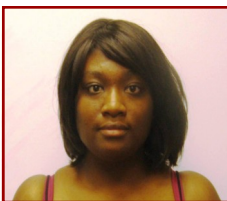
Participants now have additional time to complete the following activities for 2015:

1. Select a PCP
2. Complete the health assessment
3. Review the results of the health risk assessment with your PCP and return the signed physician form to your carrier

PCP copays can still be waived once the activities are completed through **12/31/15. And you avoid the surcharge!**

Go to <http://dbm.maryland.gov/benefits/Pages/WellnessHome.aspx> for links to the carrier sites and easy tips for wellness completion.

WELCOME NEW EMPLOYEES

**Taneisha Taylor**

joined WCDSS as a Child Support Specialist on September 2, 2015. Taneisha earned a Bachelor's of Arts

degree in Criminal Justice from John Jay College of Criminal Justice. She is the mother of two and enjoys bowling and reading.

Meaghan

Richard joined WCDSS's Child Support Division as a Child Support Specialist on September 2, 2015.

**Terri Gwizdala**

joined WCDSS on September 18, 2015. Terri serves as the Early Childhood coordinator at the Family Center. Terri earned a Masters degree in Early Childhood Education from Concordia University. She is married and has one son, Alex. Terri enjoys reading, quilting and photography.

**Lashea Brumbaugh**

joined the Child Welfare staff as a CPS worker on the Blue team on

September 9, 2015. Lashea earned a MSW from Shippensburg University. She enjoys Jeeps, shopping, Pinterest and spending time with her nephew.

Carrie Corwine

joined WCDSS's Family Investment Division on October 14, 2015. Carrie has a Bachelor's degree from Shepherd University. She has two sons, ages 11 and 14.

**Brandee Evans**

joined the Family Investment Division on September 2, 2015. Brandee is a 2006 graduate of North Hagerstown High School. Brandee is the mother of three daughters.



WELCOME NEW EMPLOYEES

Continued



Katia Chacon

joined WCDSS on September 1, 2015 as an intern in Child Welfare. Katia is pursuing her

MSW from Salisbury University. On October 26, 2015, Katia joined the WCDSS staff in IFP on the Green team. Katia moved to the United States at the age of 16 and has four siblings and four nephews. In her free time, Katia enjoys walking her three dogs.



Te'Andra Shockley

joined WCDSS on October 26, 2015 in Services.

Te'Andra is a Social Worker

on the Green team. Te'Andra earned a MSW degree from the University of Maryland, Baltimore. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with family and friends.

Tim Toone

joined WCDSS as a Family Investment Specialist on October 19, 2015.

Tim earned a Bachelor's of Arts degree from

Shepherd University. Tim enjoys the outdoors and spends his spare time hiking, playing tennis, swimming and gardening. He also enjoys spending time with his large family and friends, and his 10 cats and dog. Tim has traveled to the North Pole and the Middle East and has had the pleasure of meeting former President Jimmy Carter.



Angela

Millett

joined WCDSS as a Family Investment Specialist on October 19,

2015. She possesses a Bachelor's of Science degree in Human Services and is the mother of three, ages 5, 10 and 11. Angela enjoys making jewelry and arts and crafts, and camping. She speaks Spanish and Italian.



A positive attitude brings strength, energy and initiative.

WELCOME NEW EMPLOYEES

Continued



Carrie Tressler is an intern at the Sunshine Center. Carrie has a BSW degree from Shippensburg University where she is currently pursuing her MSW.

Carrie is married and has a 12 year old daughter, Adele. She enjoys spending time with family and friends, and music. She has run 17 races, including one 10K and two obstacle races.

Samantha Barrett is an intern in Services. She is pursuing a BSW degree from Shepherd University. She is an only child and enjoys being with her family, reading and spending time with her sorority sisters.



Cassandra Theriault is an intern in Services. She earned a BSW degree from Salisbury University and is currently working on earning her

MSW. She is married and has three daughters. Cassandra enjoys baking.



Taylor Goodie is an intern in Adult Services. Taylor is a student at Hood College pursuing a degree in Social Work.

Kellianne Dubbin is an intern at the Family Center. She is a student at Hood College.



Angela House is an intern at the Family Center. She has a Bachelor's of Science degree in Psychology, a certificate in Energy Healing and is a Reiki-Master-Teacher. She has a twelve year old daughter and has a passion for traveling. Angela is originally from Colombia, South America and has lived in the United States for over 20 years.



WELCOME NEW EMPLOYEES

Continued



Olivia Laguerre is an intern in Foster Care from Salisbury University. She is an only child and has two dogs, Balto and Pookie. Olivia enjoys reading, cooking and yoga.

Friends of Safe Place, the non-profit arm of Safe Place, Washington County's Child Advocacy Center hosted a Krimes Against Kids Summit on Friday, November 6.

The Summit was a multi-disciplinary conference attended by professionals working in the areas of investigations, interviewing, assessment, prosecution, and treatment of child abuse, and neglect. The Summit focused on several key areas of child abuse including: how abuse and trauma affects learning, how schools and law enforcement can work together, and what happens after child abuse is reported. The highlight of the Summit was retiring WCDSS Director, David A. Engle, who talked about the history of Safe Place. A reception immediately followed honoring Mr. Engle.



AFFORDABLE CARE ACT UPDATE

Open enrollment began November 1st on the Maryland Health Connection. This year's open enrollment period runs November 1, 2015-January 31, 2016.

Family Investment processes medical assistance applications all year. During open enrollment, clients whose income may be too much to qualify for Medicaid have a variety of different options from which they may choose.

Consumers can visit www.marylandhealthconnection.gov to apply. WCDSS has a computer lab that customers can also use to apply.



Family Investment Division Wins Golden Fork Award

Representatives from DHR will be on hand November 23 to present the Family Investment Division with its 7th Golden Fork Award.

The Golden Fork Award goes to offices that excel in Food Supplement application timeliness, completed Food Supplement PIRAMID Pre-reviews and in SNAP challenge completion.

Congratulations to Washington County's Family Investment!

20 Years of Helping Young Families Celebrated

The Family Center celebrated 20 years of providing comprehensive, center-based education services to young parents and their children Friday, November 13th at Hager Hall in Hagerstown. Over 120 families and elected officials and other special guests attended the 20 year reunion.

The Family Center has been a program of WCDSS since it began in 1995 and has provided services to over 3,300 families in Washington County. Family Center services include education programs (GED and High School Credit), on-site early childhood education, parenting classes, recreation and life skills activities for parents and children as well as transportation to and from the program.

